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Exploration and Discovery.

An Early Christian Hymn.—Students of early Christian literature are placed under new obligations to Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, the discoverers of the Oxyrhynchus Logia, by their publication of an interesting Christian hymn from a fourth-century papyrus recently purchased by them in Egypt for Lord Amherst's collection.¹

The hymn consists of twenty-five lines, each divided into three verses (the twenty-fifth into two), each verse consisting of seven long syllables or their equivalents. The author was less scrupulous as to metrical quantities than as to accentual considerations, for the verses almost without exception have an accent on the syllable before the last, while long and short syllables are not always properly distinguished. In this peculiarity of accent the hymn resembles another fourth-century poem, the *Ad Virgines Exhortatio* of Gregory of Nazianzos. The hymn is not only metrical and accentual, however; it is also alphabetic. The several lines, until the last, begin with the several letters of the Greek alphabet in order, and the three verses in a line begin with the same letter. The hymn is thus, as its editors describe it, an elaborate metrical, and they might have added accentual, acrostic.

Beyond this point the hymn does not readily lend itself to analysis. The lines seem logically independent, like the stanzas of many modern hymns. Each line has a sort of unity, and the ends of verses usually coincide with pauses in thought, in ways that sometimes suggest the parallelism of Hebrew psalms. Indeed, the alphabetic structure as well as the parallelism of this hymn recalls the Psalms, *e. g.*, Ps. 119, which is an alphabetic psalm with eight verses to a letter, just as this hymn is alphabetic with three verses to a letter. The peculiar *triple* parallelism—*tristichs*—which is the striking literary feature of this hymn, is also a recognized form of Hebrew poetry, well illustrated in Ps. 5: 11, but nowhere in our Psalter so rigidly carried through as in this hymn. Amid much that is purely hortatory there appear

¹ *The Amherst Papyri*. Being an Account of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of the Right Hon. Lord Amherst of Hackney, F.S.A., at Didlington Hall, Norfolk. By BERNARD P. GRENFELL, M.A., HON. LITT.D., Dublin, Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, and ARTHUR S. HUNT, M.A., Senior Demy of Magdalen College, Oxford; formerly Scholar of Queen's College. Part I: The Ascension of Isaiah and Other Theological Fragments. With nine plates. London: Henry Frowde, 1900.

references to the life of Jesus almost sufficient to form an "Apostles' Creed," and now and again, especially toward the close of the hymn, the fires of punishment are dwelt upon.

The hymn is here reprinted in full, substantially as translated by its discoverers, Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt. Gaps in the papyrus are indicated by dots. The better to show the structure of the hymn, the verses have been printed one below another, each stanza of three verses representing a line of the papyrus, and opposite each stanza is placed the Greek letter with which each of that stanza's verses begins.

- A (Two verses missing.)
That thou mayst receive immortal life.
- B Thou hast escaped the heavy ordinance of a lawless
(One verse missing.)
. unto love.
- Γ Thou hast come to the marriage feast of the king.
The marriage feast
. . . that thou disfigure not thyself.
- Δ Speak no more in double words
Without
(One verse missing.)
- E Some come in sheep's
Clothing, who are inwardly wolves
. from afar.
- Z Seek to live with the saints,
Seek to receive life,
Seek to escape the fire.
- H Hold fast the hope which thou hast learned,
Which the Master determined for thee,
(One verse missing.)
- Θ God came bringing many blessings,
He wrought a triple victory over death,
(One verse missing.)
- I Jesus who suffered for this,
Saying, I give my back,
That thou fall not a prey to death.
- K Glorious are the ordinances of God ;
In all things he suffers as an example.
That thou mayst have glorious life.
- Λ He washed in Jordan,
He washed as an example,
His is the stream that cleanseth.

- M He abode on the mount and was tempted,
 And greatly
 (One verse missing.)
- N Now work out thine inheritance,
 Now is the time for thee to give,
 Even now, to them that hunger greatly.
- Ξ God said, Feed the stranger,
 The stranger and the helpless,
 That thou mayst escape the fire.
- O The Father sent Him to suffer,
 Who has received eternal life,
 Who has received power over immortality.
- II He preached the gospel to His servants, saying,
 The poor [shall possess] a kingdom,
 Theirs is the inheritance.
- P He was scourged as an example,
 In order to give an impulse to all,
 . . . in order to destroy death.
- Σ In order that thou after death mayst see resurrection,
 That thou mayst see the light to eternity,
 That thou mayst receive the God of lights.
- T O the rest of the sorrowful,
 O the leaping of the [lame?],
 O the fire, fearful for the wicked.
- T Freely hast thou come under grace,
 Listen to the prayer of the poor,
 Speak no more arrogantly.
- Φ Fearful . . . is the fire,
 Fearful for evermore,
 Yea, fearful is the fire for the wicked.
- X (One verse missing.)
 Christ, even crowns of the saints,
 But for the wicked . . . the fire.
- Ψ (One verse missing.)
 Singing psalms with the saints,
 . . . feed the soul evermore.
- Ω (One verse missing.)
 Forget never what thou hast learned,
 That thou mayst receive what he told thee.

 (One verse missing.)
 . . . death thou canst no longer . . .